Supplier Representative Policy

Author:	Head of Procurement
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Target Audience:	All Viapath Staff and External Suppliers
Policy Owner:	Head of Procurement

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Viapath is aware of the important role that companies and other suppliers play to assist healthcare practitioners in providing safe, cost effective products and services to the patients in their care.

1.2 To establish and maintain a good working relationship with our suppliers we insist that the guidelines contained within this policy are followed. In doing so it is hoped that the relationship between Viapath and its suppliers will be a constructive one.

1.3 Should you require any clarification on the contents of this policy please contact a member of the Procurement Department.

1.4 Where laboratories are referred to in this document, this includes Head Office and other Viapath premises.

2.0 Purpose

2.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide guidance to staff on the actions that can, or should, be taken when dealing with supplier representatives and to inform suppliers of the standards and procedures that their staff should follow.

2.2 The policy is also designed to inform supplier representatives of the actions expected from staff to help ensure a professional relationship between Viapath and its suppliers.

2.3 This policy sets out the standards and procedures that staff should follow to ensure they work within the legal framework described in section 4 below and to ensure that procurement processes are carried out in a fair and open manner.

2.4 Any approvals required in accordance with this policy must be in writing.

3.0 Scope

3.1 The policy applies to all Viapath employees and associates and any staff who are seconded to Viapath, contract and agency staff and any other individuals working on Viapath premises.

3.2 The policy applies to all supplier representatives who visit Viapath premises.

3.3 The policy also applies to supplier representatives and employees who are permanently based on-site as part of the delivery of trials and evaluations to Viapath in addition to any specific policies or protocols in relation to such trials and evaluations.

4.0 Legal Framework & National Guidance

4.1 The Bribery Act 2010 provides a legal framework to combat bribery in the Public or Private sectors and replaces the fragmented and complex offences at common law and in the Prevention of Corruption Acts 1889-1916. The full requirements are explained in the Viapath Code of Conduct and Anti Bribery and Competition Policies both of which can be provided upon request by the Procurement Department.

5.0 Active Procurement Process

5.1 Viapath staff and supplier representatives should exercise extreme caution when meeting or visiting the laboratories whilst an active procurement process is underway for the particular goods or services being discussed or promoted. Inappropriate discussions could jeopardise the procurement process and potentially result in increased risk and costs for both parties.

5.2 Viapath staff and supplier representatives should be aware of the requirements of the Bribery Act 2010 which creates two general offences covering the offering, promising or giving an advantage and the requesting and agreeing to receive or accepting of an advantage.

6.0 Appointments

6.1 To reduce any disruption to the Department, all suppliers or representatives must make an appointment in advance with the laboratory personnel they wish to see. These appointments should be arranged to be held during normal working hours, between 09.00 hrs and 17.00 hrs Monday to Friday.

6.2 Cold calling is not permitted. Any representative found to be cold calling will be asked to immediately leave the premises and be banned from entering the laboratories.

6.3 Once an appointment has been made and before the appointment date, the representative must inform Viapath's Procurement Department.

Procurement Department
Francis House
9 King's Head Yard
London
SE1 1NA

Main switchboard: 020 7188 7188
Email: procurement@viapath.co.uk

6.4 Representatives must ensure that any commercial discussions held should include a member of the Viapath Procurement Department and only Scientific and Technical discussions should be held in the absence of any Procurement representation.

6.5 Where possible, supplier representatives must sign in the visitors' book at the main reception when visiting the laboratories and sign out before leaving.

6.6 Representatives must be accompanied at all times by Viapath staff.

6.7 Representatives must not add or remove any goods or equipment from the laboratory (including consignment stock) without the express permission of the Procurement Department, relevant General Manager (GM) or Service Delivery Manager (SDM).

6.8 Representatives are not allowed to tour the laboratories looking for staff and are strictly forbidden from entering clinical areas without a prior appointment with a senior member of the clinical staff.

6.9 Representatives must respect their position as visitors to the department and recognise that the interests and priorities of the department may differ from their own.

6.10 Representatives should be well informed about the products they are promoting. In addition to standard technical and clinical data, including information on comparative efficiency, the laboratory will wish to know what is being promoted, the basis for the promotion and the specific place that the product is expected to have in Pathology services.

6.11 Price comparisons should not be used unless they have been verified and approved by the Head of Procurement.

6.12 The purpose of any meeting between representatives and Viapath staff should be clearly identified when an appointment is made. If these are to be of a commercial nature, once an appointment has been made and before the appointment date, the representative must inform Viapath's Procurement Department.

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7.0 Products and Samples

7.1 The introduction of new products into the laboratories is strictly controlled. The procedure for the introduction of new products and equipment (including any trials and evaluations) should be channelled through the Procurement Department.

7.2 Approval to leave (free of charge) samples or on loan goods/equipment must be sought from the Procurement Department. Samples must not be left with medical staff or laboratories without prior approval.

7.3 Samples should only be accepted by laboratory staff to inspect the product/equipment and get a look and feel of the product/equipment qualities and potential capabilities.

7.4 Samples provided for product trials and evaluations should be new (unused) products/equipment supplied in appropriately sealed packaging.

8.0 Trials and Evaluations

8.1 All trials and equipment evaluations undertaken within Viapath laboratories require the prior approval of the Procurement Department, relevant General Manager (GM) and Service Delivery Manager (SDM).

8.2 All parties will require a copy of the trial protocol from the supplier representative and will fulfil its responsibility to provide appropriate support for the trial, to protect laboratory staff safety and ensure compliance with all statutory requirements.

8.3 All equipment brought on to any Viapath site needs to comply with the Viapath QMS processes for validation and decontamination.

9.0 Equipment

9.1 The introduction of new equipment into the laboratories is strictly controlled. The procedure for the introduction of new equipment (including equipment trials) is detailed in a separate document which is available upon request from the Procurement Department.

9.2 Equipment must not be left on Viapath premises without prior approval by the Procurement Department. This also applies to any equipment that is left on-site whilst laboratory equipment is being repaired or serviced.

9.3 Any equipment brought into the laboratory without the appropriate prior approval will be removed and the supplier's representatives being banned from entering the premises.

9.4 All equipment must comply with current statutory safety regulations and be CE marked.

10.0 Infection Prevention and Control Guidelines

10.1 Supplier representatives must be aware that all personnel who visit the laboratories have the potential to introduce and transmit micro-organisms. Supplier representatives are required to comply with the appropriate Trust Infection Prevention and Control policies and practices and should familiarise themselves with these policies before entering the Trust and Viapath laboratories. Representatives will be expected to use the hand sanitizer or wash their hands when entering and leaving each clinical area.

10.2 Whenever a piece of equipment is brought into the laboratories there is a risk of transmission of infection. Micro-organisms can be carried from hospital to hospital. All goods and equipment must be clean and decontaminated to the appropriate manufacturers' standard before being brought into the laboratory and must have a decontamination certificate attached. It is the responsibility of the suppliers' representative to ensure that the equipment is clean and sterile and that a certificate is attached. It is the responsibility of the person receiving the equipment on behalf of the laboratory to check the decontamination certificate attached to the equipment is valid and to file the certificate appropriately.

10.3 The potential exists for supplier representatives to come into contact with blood and bodily fluids. It is their responsibility to ensure they have the adequate immunisation. They should also familiarise themselves with the potential risk and report any incidents to the laboratory staff.

10.4 All equipment brought on to any Viapath site needs to comply with the Viapath QMS processes for validation and decontamination.

11.0 Education, Training and Promotional Activity

11.1 Any education, training or promotional activity which is to be undertaken for Viapath by suppliers representatives must be approved by the Marketing Department who can be contacted via brand@viapath.co.uk Additional information can be accessed via http://www.viapath.co.uk/brand-resource-page

11.2 Existing hospital policies should not be compromised and any comparisons drawn to practices in use in the laboratories should be in the form of properly controlled published studies.

11.3 Leaflets and posters produced by suppliers/industry must be approved by the Marketing Department prior to any distribution or display and must not contravene existing Trust policies.

11.4 Representatives must not encourage use of products or equipment that contravenes any existing Viapath contracts. If this is brought to the attention of the Procurement Department, the relevant representatives will be banned from entering any Viapath premises.

12.0 Gifts and Hospitality

12.1 Supplier representatives are required to comply with the Viapath policy on Gifts and Hospitality and should familiarise themselves with this policy before entering the laboratories/departments. A copy is available upon request from the Procurement Department.